

No comment on spy ship

Bush urges law on exposing secrets

George Bush, the outgoing director of central intelligence, grimly refused to comment Monday on published reports that the Glomar Explorer recovered a Soviet submarine intact.

And, in a speech to a Sacramento audience, Bush called for tough legislation to curb persons who expose intelligence secrets.

Time magazine, in its current issue, quotes high naval sources as confirming that the Glomar Explorer, a Howard Hughes-constructed ship, recovered the sunken Soviet submarine nearly intact in 1974.

The Central Intelligence Agency, headed by Bush, had earlier admitted to only a partial recovery.

The Time story was an expansion and confirmation of an interview given to The Sacramento Union two weeks ago, by Sacramento hairdresser Joseph Rodriguez, who was an engine room crewman aboard the ship.

Time quoted Rodriguez as one of its sources about the recovery operation.

Bush issued a terse "absolutely no comment" when asked by reporters about the Time report outside the Sacramento Inn, where he addressed the Comstock Club.

"You're wasting my time and yours," he told one reporter who attempted to pursue the inquiry.

Bush, a former Texas congressman and diplomat who will end a year as chief of the CIA in January, didn't refer to the Glomar Explorer incident specifically in his speech, but he called for a legislative crackdown on those who reveal intelligence secrets—specifically the names of U.S. agents.

One such agent, Richard Welch, was murdered in Athens after he was identified as a CIA employee in the magazine Counterspy.

"Our laws are grossly inadequate to protect against this kind of abuse," Bush said.

Bush said he has "nothing but contempt" for authors who expose intelligence secrets. Laws should be "carefully drawn," he said, to counteract the increasing trend toward revelation.



Sacramentan Lou Grab, left, reminisces with CIA chief George Bush. The two men served together on the aircraft carrier San Jacinto.

"I challenge," Bush told the overflow Comstock Club audience, "those who claim that secrecy in intelligence work is inconsistent with freedom and democracy to give us a realistic preview of what this nation's freedom and democracy would look like if we decided to abandon this essential protection against our adversaries."

Too much attention, Bush continued, has been paid to often overblown and inaccurate accounts of the CIA's covert operations and too little to its positive, intelligence-gathering activities.

Covert activities, Bush said, comprise less than 2 percent of the CIA budget and are not undertaken without high-level interagency review.